2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

796
535

Fig. 88. Circle Dance, a Part of the Kumiss Festival.

531
415

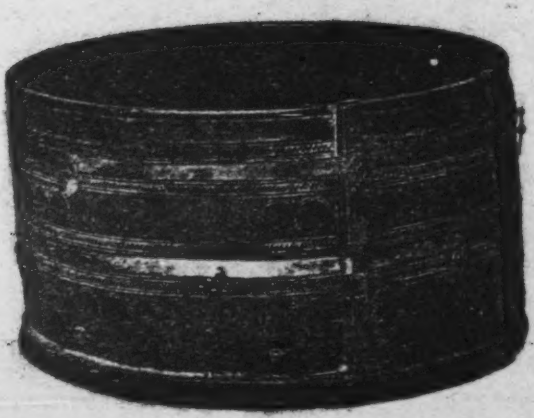


Fig. 89 (70-8613). Cylindrical Wooden Vessel used in the Kumiss Festival.

20: Czaplicka--116-117 E-3 (1915-16) 1916 Yakut-1-2
116, 533, 535, 585

"This dance[RCH: i.e., the dance performed at Yakut weddings] is called by the Tungus ikandzyedzyem ('I sing'), in reference to the monotonous chanting which accompanies it. A large circle is formed of men and women, not necessarily in alternation, or sometimes men and women from separate circles. Each puts the right arm under a neighbour's left, the arms being bent so that the clasped hands are brought close together in front of the body. Then all together, keeping time to the refrain,[117] move the left foot sideways in a short step, at the same time throwing the upper part of the body slightly forward. The right foot is then brought behind the left, this movement being accompanied by a slight backward jerk of the body. The double movement of the feet, left first, then right, carries the whole circle round from right to left, clockwise, and an alternate left and right swing of the hips accompanies the forward and backward movement of the body. This circling goes forward for hours, some of the dancers occasionally dropping out, while others take their places.

There is always a leader who chants a sort of recitative with words of his own (or borrowed from some well-known expert in the dance), and the refrain is taken up energetically by all the dancers in chorus--

Haiko--haikan!
Oho--gaikan!

20: Czaplicka--116-117 E-3 (1915-16) 1916 Yakut-2
116, 533, 535, 585

Handikadzyem!
Yahore, yahore,
Yahore, y-a-a-a!

All the words of this refrain are meaningless, with the exception of handikadzyem, 'I am going faster,' an exhortation to quicken the tempo."

20: Czaplicka--118 E-3 (1915-16) 1916 Yakut
116, 535

"The Yessei Yakut also dance ikandzyedzyem and play maasyuk. The latter name is the same in both Tungus and Yakut, probably it is a Yakut word and marks the provenance of the game. The dance is known by the Yakut as ungkulatem."

The Yakuts are very fond of eloquence. The ability to make a good speech at a meeting is highly regarded, and the speaker is greeted with cries of approval. 537

With regard to the songs (yrya), the melodies are simple and monotonous, but there are different genres, and the images are often artistic. It is possible to sing love songs (for girls and boys), dance songs, humorous songs, shaman songs, and so on, as well as improvisations, when a person tells in song what he has been doing or seeing. The motif of this kind of song is very simple and usually consists of two or three repeated notes. 533

The Yakuts did not have any other kind of music, apart from vocal. There were no musical instruments, leaving aside the shaman tambourine and the khomus, a small iron jew's-harp known to more or less all the peoples of the Old World. [534]

The dances of the Yakuts are very original. Particularly interesting is a round called the *ohyoxai*, performed during festivals. 535

The dancers stand in a circle arm in arm and in time to the singing move with majestic steps to the left, in the direction of movement of the sun. There were variations of this dance in different localities. There were also various dancing games.

Ornamental art attained a high level of development among the Yakuts. The carving of wood and mammoth ivory; the casting and stamping of silver, copper and gold; the embroidery and appliqué of leather and fabric; fur appliqué and mosaic; the weaving of horsehair: all these were arts performed with materials available to the Yakuts and in which the craftsmen showed particular artistic taste and skill. Basically there was no graphic art for other than decorative purposes among the Yakuts, just as in the folk art of the past as a whole, if we disregard the animal, and human figures made by the shamans, and the later carved sculpture made in imitation of Russian examples. 531 532

The style of the Yakut design was original, although it contained Tungus, Mongol and other elements. Geometric motifs predominated, at times rather intricate ones. On the carved wooden vessels we find circular designs consisting of straight, serrated and wavy lines with points, dashes and so on, covering almost the entire surface. In the stamping, casting and birchbark carving, there predominate symmetrical, rounded figures, such as hooks, meanders, pincer-shapes, and so on, with linear squares, concentric circles and so forth. Very typical is a design found on scoops and saddlecloths; here one is struck by the central two-horned lyre—a purely Yakut motif. 531

The darkening of silver, and the painting of wood and alder with a concoction of alder, were developed.

In the selection of colors, preference was shown for black, red and, to some extent yellow and blue. The same preference was shown in the selection of fabric of the appropriate color.

* * *

Such was the culture of the Yakut people up to the October Revolution. 175

Particularly important was the cultural assistance which the Yakuts obtained from the fraternal Russian people during the prerevolutionary years. In the 19th century it was mainly the political exiles, beginning with the Decembrists, who spread culture through Yakutiya. There were also other progressive Russian people who diffused the beginnings of a cultivated way of life among the Yakuts. In particular, they laid the foundations of the Yakut written language. 177 212

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

535
292
302
415
142

Dance of girls with chorons (kumys pitchers). Amateur performance at collective farm.

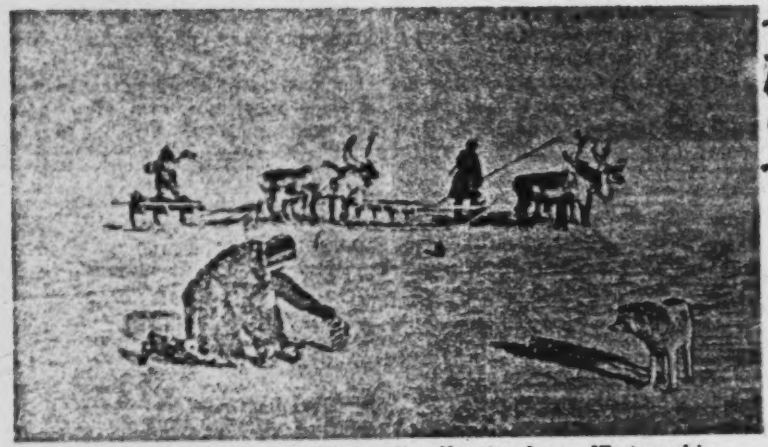
Theatre

545 During the time of the Soviet regime a Yakut national art with new forms completely unknown in Yakutiya in the pre-Revolutionary period has blossomed. Before the Revolution Yakuts did not know about the theatre, and music and singing were only found in their most primitive form. In 1925 members of the drama group attached to the People's Russian Theatre in Yakutsk was formed into the Yakut National Troupe, and in 1930 a Yakut [536] National Theatre Studio was set up. From the very first years of its existence the actors set themselves the task of a realistic portrayal of Yakut life, denunciation of the merchants and toyons, and demonstration of the greatness of the Socialist Revolution. The theatre gradually attracted young Yakut actors and actresses who had graduated from the [877] Central Theatre School and Studios. They performed works by Soviet-Yakut dramatists with great success.

Art

532 For centuries Yakutiya has been known for its applied ornamental art, but professional artists only began to appear in the last quarter of the 19th century.

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan



Setting bait for foxes. "Victory" collective farm, Khatangskiy Rayon, Taymyr National Okrug.

become common. The art of dancing was practically unknown to the Dolgans. Like the Evenks, they only had rounds (with the refrain "kheyro") in which the men and women went round and round, leading each other by the arm and stamping on the ground.

The graphic art of the Dolgans was of an applied nature. Both festive and ordinary clothing was richly ornamented with beads or appliquéd with narrow strips of colored material. Patterned embroidery with deerhair on suede dyed red with an infusion of alder bark or ochre, or dyed black with graphite, was common. Also to be found was fine openwork embroidery with tendon thread on the straps and belts of the reindeer harness. Decorating the clothing was a job of the women. The men mainly engaged in mammoth-ivory carving. They acquired a particularly high degree of skill in carving cheek-plates for the reindeer halter. Tin-inlaid fronts for reindeer saddles and knife handles were also found. The smiths were considered to be very skilled at inlaying iron objects with copper and silver. The runners and backs of light, low sleds common in the Khatangskiy Rayon show an intriguing range of colors. Dolgan designs for the most part are geometric; they consist of combinations of crosses, semicircles, zigzags and broken lines. Wood-carving of a religious nature was also commonly found. The representations were usually very symbolic.

The Post-Revolutionary Period in the Life of the Dolgans

[In 1926, there were already 17 cooperative stores in the Dolgan territory. In 1931, the former clan Soviets were changed over and replaced by territorial nomadic Soviets, which went to make up the Taymyr Dolgan-Nennish National Okrug.

[Collectivization of the Dolgans was begun in 1930-31 and completed in 1938. The Dolgan collective farms have collectivized reindeer herds, lines of permanent polar-fox traps, supplies of portable steel springtraps, firearms for hunting and protection of the herds, seines and vertical nets, reindeer harness, sleds, buildings, and special Arctic clothing. The